WRITING AT BEREAN

SBL quick guide

SBL style comes from *The SBL Handbook of Style*, published by the Society of Biblical Literature. It builds on the Chicago Manual of Style and adds rules for biblical studies, such as standard abbreviations for biblical books, journals, and series. Your professor will tell you when a course requires SBL style.

How SBL style works

In your sentence	Put a superscript number at the end of the sentence or clause that uses the source, after the punctuation.
Footnote	The first time you cite a source, give a full note. Every later time, give a shortened note, even when the same source appears in the note just before. Do not use "ibid."
Bibliography	At the end of the paper, list every source in alphabetical order by the author's last name.
Place of publication	SBL Press now follows the Chicago Manual of Style, 18th edition, and leaves out the city of publication. Include the city only if your professor asks for it.

Patterns for common sources

SERIES and *JOURNAL* stand for the abbreviations explained below the table.

Book, one author	
Note	1. Firstname Lastname, *Title of Book: Subtitle* (Publisher, Year), page.
Short	2. Lastname, *Short Title*, page.
Bib.	Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book: Subtitle*. Publisher, Year.
Book, two authors	
Note	1. Firstname Lastname and Firstname Lastname, *Title of Book* (Publisher, Year), page.
Short	2. Lastname and Lastname, *Short Title*, page.
Bib.	Lastname, Firstname, and Firstname Lastname. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year.

Book in a series, such as a commentary	
Note	1. Firstname Lastname, *Title of Book*, SERIES number (Publisher, Year), page.
Short	2. Lastname, *Short Title*, page.
Bib.	Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book*. SERIES number. Publisher, Year.
Essay in an edited book	
Note	1. Firstname Lastname, "Title of Essay," in *Title of Book*, ed. Firstname Lastname (Publisher, Year), page.
Short	2. Lastname, "Short Essay Title," page.
Bib.	Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Essay." Pages first–last in *Title of Book*. Edited by Firstname Lastname. Publisher, Year.
Journal article	
Note	1. Firstname Lastname, "Title of Article," *JOURNAL* volume (Year): page.
Short	2. Lastname, "Short Article Title," page.
Bib.	Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Article." *JOURNAL* volume (Year): first page–last page.
Web page	
Note	1. Firstname Lastname, "Title of Page," Title of Website, Month Day, Year, URL.
Short	2. Lastname, "Short Page Title."
Bib.	Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Page." Title of Website. Month Day, Year. URL.

Abbreviations

Journals and reference works	Use the SBL abbreviation, in italics, in notes and in the bibliography: *JBL* for *Journal of Biblical Literature*. If a journal has no SBL abbreviation, write its full title in italics.
Series	Use the SBL abbreviation without italics, followed by the volume number: NICNT, WBC 12. Never italicize a series name.
Where to find them	The full lists are in chapter 8 of *The SBL Handbook of Style*.

Citing the Bible

Where	Give Bible references in parentheses in your sentence or in a footnote.
Book names	Abbreviate without periods (Gen, Exod, Matt, Rom, 1 Cor). Spell the name out when it begins a sentence or when you mention the book without chapter and verse: “In Romans, Paul argues.”
Chapter and verse	Use a colon between chapter and verse (Rom 3:23), an en dash for a range (Rom 5:1–5), a comma between verses in one chapter (Mark 7:11, 21), and a semicolon between chapters (Mark 7:11; 8:2).
Translation	Use the standard abbreviation, such as NRSV, NIV, or ESV. If you quote one translation throughout, name it at your first citation. If you quote several, name the translation every time.

Formatting basics

Notes	Number notes in order through the paper. Every later reference to a source uses its shortened note.
Bibliography	Title the page Bibliography. List sources alphabetically by the author's last name and use a hanging indent.
Titles	Italicize titles of books, journals, and reference works. Put titles of essays, articles, and web pages in quotation marks. Capitalize the first word and all major words.
Page ranges	Give page numbers alone, without “p.” or “pp.” In most ranges, shorten the second number: 159–74, 311–43.

Before you submit

- ☐ Every quotation and borrowed idea has a footnote.
- ☐ Later notes for a source are shortened, and I did not use “ibid.”
- ☐ Journals and series use their SBL abbreviations.
- ☐ Bible book names are abbreviated without periods, except at the start of a sentence.

Berean Institutes · Follows *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd edition (2014), with SBL Press’s current practice of leaving out the city of publication. Your professor’s instructions take precedence. Questions: admissions@bereaninstitutes.org